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Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and presidential statements on counter-terrorism, conflict prevention in Africa, the protection of civilians, women, peace and security, children and armed conflict, and on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA),

Recalling its visit to the Lake Chad Basin Region (the Region) from 2 to 7 March 2017 to engage in dialogue with the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, displaced persons, security and humanitarian personnel, civil society including women's organizations, and regional bodies,

Affirming its solidarity and full support for the conflict-affected populations of the Region including displaced and host communities who are suffering from the ongoing security crisis, humanitarian emergency, and development deficits resulting from the violence by terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), and its solidarity with the respective Governments in their efforts to address these urgent needs, whilst addressing adverse economic conditions,

Affirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria,

Recognizing the determination and ownership of the Governments in the Region, as well as well as sub-regional and regional organizations, to address the impact of Boko Haram and ISIL,

Expressing grave concern at the ongoing terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram and ISIL, and the dire humanitarian situation across the Region caused by the activities of Boko Haram, including large-scale displacement, and the risk of famine in north-east Nigeria,

Reaffirming that terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomever committed, and *remaining determined* to contribute further to

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enhancing the effectiveness of the overall effort to fight this scourge on a global level,

Expressing deep concern that terrorist groups benefiting from transnational organized crime and trafficking in all forms may contribute to undermining affected States, specifically their security, stability, governance, social and economic development, and *recognizing* the connection between trafficking in persons, sexual violence and terrorism and other transnational organized criminal activities, which can prolong and exacerbate conflict and instability or intensify its impact on civilian populations,

Recognizing that security, development, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and are vital to an effective and comprehensive approach to countering terrorism, stabilisation and reconciliation,

Welcoming the commitment expressed by the Governments in the Region to combat Boko Haram, in order to create a safe and secure environment for civilians, enable the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, facilitate stabilisation, and enable access for humanitarian organisations, in accordance with the African Union Peace and Security Council's (AUPSC)'s mandate, *commending* the important territorial advances by the Governments in the Region against Boko Haram, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which has contributed to the liberation of hostages, the arrest of Boko Haram members, and an increase in the number of defectors, and further *paying tribute* to all those who have lost lives in the fight against Boko Haram,

Recognising the threat posed by terrorist groups Boko Haram and ISIL, and *recalling* that Boko Haram has been designated as associated with Al-Qaida by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee (the Committee),

Underscoring the need for a holistic, comprehensive approach to degrade and defeat Boko Haram and ISIL that includes coordinated security operations, conducted in accordance with applicable international law, as well as enhanced civilian efforts to improve governance, promote development and economic growth in affected areas, tackle radicalisation, and ensure women's empowerment and protection,

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the challenges facing the Lake Chad Basin and the wider Sahel region and *encouraging* greater regional and international coherence in addressing these challenges,

Security, Protection of Civilians and Human Rights

1. *Strongly condemns* all terrorist attacks, violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights by Boko Haram and ISIL in the Region, including those involving killings and other violence against civilians, notably women and children, abductions, pillaging, child, early and forced marriage, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual and gender-based violence, and recruitment and use of children, including increasingly the use of girls as suicide bombers, and destruction of civilian property, and *calls* for those responsible for these acts to be held accountable, and brought to justice;

2. *Recalls* the Communiqués of the AUPSC on Boko Haram, including from the 484th meeting, *recognises* the continued support of the AU to the MNJTF, and *calls* for the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin to continue their efforts in the fight against Boko Haram and implementation of the Communiqués; *further acknowledging* the need for an effective and strategic relationship between the AUPSC and the Security Council, to enable both institutions to support stability and development in the Lake Chad Basin;

3. *Encourages* Governments in the Region to sustain momentum, further enhance regional military cooperation and coordination, comply with obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, secure the conditions to enable safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, facilitate the restoration of civilian security and the rule of law in areas restored to Government control, and guarantee free movement of goods and persons; and *further encourages* regional collaboration on the implementation of the 2016 Abuja Regional Security Summit conclusions and strengthened cooperation under the auspices of a third Regional Security Summit in 2018, including with respect to post-conflict stabilisation and recovery;

4. *Welcomes* the multilateral and bilateral support provided to the military efforts in the Region and *encourages* greater support to strengthen the operational capability of the MNJTF to further the Region's efforts to combat Boko Haram and ISIL, which may include appropriate, logistical, mobility and communications assistance, equipment, as well as modalities to increase effective information sharing as appropriate, given the complex environment in which they operate and the evolving tactics of Boko Haram and ISIL, as well as training, including on sexual and gender-based violence, gender and child protection;

5. *Calls* for the urgent deployment of the remaining MNJTF civilian personnel, including Human Rights Advisers through the AU, and a dedicated Gender Adviser, and for the pledges made at the AU donor conference of 1 February 2015 in support of the MNJTF to be promptly fulfilled, *encourages* the AU to disperse funds provided for the MNJTF by key partners, *further encourages* Member States to contribute generously to the AU Trust Fund, and *requests* the Secretary-General to advocate strongly with the international community and donors in support of this effort;

6. *Reiterates* its call on Member States to move vigorously and decisively to cut the flows of funds and other financial assets and economic resources to individuals, groups, undertakings and entities on the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions List, including Boko Haram, *reiterates* its readiness to consider listing individuals, groups, undertakings and entities providing support to Boko Haram, including those who are financing, arming, planning or recruiting for Boko Haram, and in this regard *encourages* all Member States to submit to the Committee listing requests for individuals, groups, undertakings and entities supporting Boko Haram;

7. *Calls upon* the countries of the Region to prevent, criminalize, investigate, prosecute and ensure accountability of those who engage in transnational organized crime, in particular in arms trafficking and trafficking in persons;

8. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations entities, including UNOCA, UNOWAS, and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) to redouble their support for Governments in the Region, as well as sub-regional and regional organizations, to address the impact of Boko Haram and ISIL violence on the peace and stability of the Region, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism, in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and to conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses;

9. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular, international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law; and *further encourages* Governments in the Region to consider, in discussion with communities, the potential impact of operations against and security responses to Boko Haram and ISIL on people's livelihoods, and freedom of movement;

10. *Expresses regret* at the tragic loss of life in the January 2017 Rann incident, *welcomes* the commitment expressed by relevant Nigerian authorities to investigate and ensure accountability for those responsible, and *calls* for transparency on the findings of the investigation report and action taken;

11. *Expresses* concern about the protection needs of civilians in the Region affected by the scourge of terrorism, including those resulting from sexual exploitation and abuse, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, and recruitment and use of children in violation of international law; and *welcomes* initial steps taken such as the deployment of female members of the security services to IDP camps where sexual exploitation and abuse has been reported or confirmed;

12. *Reiterates* the primary responsibility of Member States to protect civilian populations on their territories, in accordance with their obligations under international law, and *calls on* all Governments in the Region, and as relevant the United Nations and other actors, to prioritise human rights protection concerns including through: greater cooperation by concerned Governments with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Offices of the Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Children and Armed Conflict; taking urgent measures to prevent arbitrary arrest and detention and ensure that persons deprived of liberty are treated in accordance with international law; enhanced capacity and responsiveness of national human rights mechanisms across the Region; and taking measures to increase the number of women in the security sector;

13. *Emphasises* the importance of strengthening cross-border judicial cooperation in identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses, as well as the most serious crimes, such as sexual and gender-based violence; *calls on* Governments in the Region to provide rapid access for survivors of abduction and sexual violence to specialised medical and psychosocial services, and community reintegration, to prevent stigmatisation and persecution, and

encourages the international community to extend its support in this regard; *urges* the prompt investigation of all allegations of abuse, including sexual abuse, and holding those responsible accountable; and *encourages* the creation of a timeline for transferral of camp management to civilian structures to ensure the civilian nature of IDP sites, whilst taking due consideration of the security situation in these sites;

14. *Urges* Governments in the Region to ensure women's full and equal participation in national institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including in the development of strategies to counter Boko Haram and ISIL, *welcomes* initial efforts in the Region to address women's representation such as the 25% quota for elected offices in Niger, and *strongly encourages* the further development, implementation and funding of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria; and *encourages* all regional organizations engaged in peace and security efforts in the Region to ensure that gender analysis and women's participation are integrated into their assessments, planning, and operations;

Humanitarian

15. *Welcomes* the efforts of Governments in the Region and of regional and sub-regional organisations, as well as the hospitality provided by host communities for the millions of displaced people, the majority of whom are women and children, who are uniquely impacted, and *urges* Governments in the Region, donors and relevant international non-governmental organisations to urgently redouble their efforts and ensure close coordination, including between development and humanitarian actors, in particular to enhance early recovery, food security, improve living conditions, and increase livelihood opportunities;

16. *Urges* all parties to the conflict to ensure respect for and protection of humanitarian personnel, facilities, and their means of transport and equipment, and to facilitate safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian organisations to deliver lifesaving aid to affected people, and in particular in the case of Governments, where applicable, through facilitating bureaucratic and administrative procedures such as the expediting of outstanding registrations, and importation of humanitarian supplies, and *further calls upon* Governments in the Region to increase collaboration with United Nations partners including through more effective civilian-military coordination mechanisms;

17. *Welcomes* the $458 million in humanitarian assistance pledged at the Oslo conference for 2017 and urges swift disbursement of these funds to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis and to begin to address endemic development needs; and *strongly encourages* all other/non-traditional donors to contribute in line with the needs highlighted in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plans of each country,

18. *Further welcomes* the Government of Nigeria's announcement of its 2017 spending plans for north-east Nigeria which project total federal and state government expenditure of $1 billion on development and humanitarian activities, and *urges* swift implementation of these plans;

19. *Welcomes* the scaling up of the United Nations response, especially in north-east Nigeria, and *calls for* further deployment of experienced staff, measures

to reduce staff turnover, and strong coordination, including through creation of civil-military coordination guidelines, provision of training to further improve coordination between armed forces and humanitarian personnel, coordination across borders and the development of multi-year prioritised plans; and *further calls on* all humanitarian organisations to ensure programming is gender-sensitive, based on strengthening resilience within communities and developed based on the need of, and where possible in consultation with affected people and local organisations;

20. *Urges* relevant national and through them local authorities to ensure that resources dedicated to the humanitarian effort are directed to those most in need;

21. *Calls upon* Governments in the Region to ensure that the return of refugees and IDPs to their areas of origin is voluntary, based on informed decisions, and in safety and dignity; *urges* relevant national and local authorities to work cooperatively with displaced persons and host communities, to prevent secondary displacement of affected populations, and to take all necessary steps to respond to the humanitarian needs of host communities, and *encourages* the international community to extend its support in this regard; *welcomes* the signing by the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, of the tripartite agreement on 2 March 2017 on the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees, and *urges* its swift and complete implementation;

Root Causes and Development

22. *Calls upon* the Governments in the Region to take further measures to address social, political, economic and gender inequalities, and environmental challenges, and to develop strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, in order to help address the conditions which have enabled the emergence and survival of Boko Haram and ISIL;

23. *Recognises* the complex challenges faced by the Region and *welcomes* the development of programmes by the respective Governments to help build and sustain peace by addressing the root causes of the crisis, namely the "Buhari Plan" of Nigeria, the Programme "Renaissance" of Niger, the "Recovery Road Map" the Special Youth Triennial Programme of Cameroon, the "Vision 2030: the Chad we want" of Chad, and the Lake Chad Development and Climate Resilience Action Plan of the LCBC; *calls upon* respective Governments to strengthen their coordination and prioritisation within these programmes to enable effective implementation, and *calls upon* international partners to extend their support in this regard;

24. *Calls upon* Governments in the Region, including through the support of the international community, to support early recovery activities and long-term investment in vital services such as health care and education, agriculture, infrastructure such as the safe trade corridor and livelihoods, social cohesion, good governance, and the rule of law, to enhance longer-term recovery and resilience of populations, particularly for the areas with the most pressing need;

25. *Encourages* the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), together with the LCBC, to develop a comprehensive and common strategy that effectively addresses the drivers that contributed to the emergence of Boko Haram and ISIL, with a particular focus on longer term development needs; and *further urges* the two sub-regional organisations to convene their planned summit on Boko Haram to adopt a common strategy and develop active cooperation and coordination mechanisms;

26. *Recognises* the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the Region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, and *emphasises* the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors;

27. *Acknowledges* the important contribution of civil society, in particular women's and youth organisations, to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts in the region, and *encourages* greater dialogue between respective Governments and civil society, as well as support;

28. *Calls upon* the United Nations and its partners to make further progress towards the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) in order to address comprehensively the security, political, and developmental challenges and the underlying root causes and drivers of instability and conflicts in the Sahel region;

Disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration, and accountability

29. *Encourages* Governments in the Region, in collaboration with regional and sub-regional organisations, relevant United Nations entities and other relevant stakeholders, and, in the context of this resolution, to develop and implement a regional and coordinated strategy that encompasses transparent, inclusive, human rights-compliant disarmament, demobilisation, de-radicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives, in line with strategies for prosecution, where appropriate, for persons associated with Boko Haram and ISIL, drawing upon regional and international best practice and lessons learned; and *urges* relevant national and through them local actors, to develop and implement appropriate plans for the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, and where appropriate prosecution of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and other community-based security groups;

30. *Stresses* the need to pay particular attention to the treatment and reintegration of women and children formerly associated with Boko Haram and ISIL, including through the signing and implementing of protocols for the rapid handover of children suspected of having association with Boko Haram to relevant civilian child protection actors, as well as access for child protection actors to all centres holding children, in accordance with applicable international obligations, and the best interests of the child;

31. *Urges* Governments in the Region to develop and implement consistent policies for promoting defections from Boko Haram and ISIL and for deradicalising and reintegrating those who do defect, and to ensure that there is no impunity for those responsible for terrorist acts, and abuses and violations of international human

rights and violations of humanitarian law; and *invites* the international community to extend its support to the Governments in the Region in developing and implementing their disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies and policies;

32. *Calls upon* concerned governments to urgently develop and implement, consistent with international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law as applicable, vetting criteria and processes allowing for the prompt assessment of all persons who have been associated with Boko Haram and ISIL in the custody of authorities, including persons captured or surrendered to authorities, or who are found in refugee or IDP camps, and to ensure that children are treated in accordance with international law; and *encourages* Governments in the Region, within the context of this resolution, to prosecute those responsible for terrorist acts, where appropriate, and to develop both rehabilitation programmes in custodial settings for detained terrorist suspects and sentenced persons, and reintegration programmes to assist persons either released from custody having served their sentence or those who have completed a rehabilitation programme in an alternative setting, in order to facilitate reintegration into their communities;

Follow-Up

33. *Encourages* the Secretary-General, with a view to enhancing collaboration and responsibility among relevant entities and mobilising resources for the region, to make a high level visit to the Region, and *invites* him to consider undertaking a joint visit with the World Bank, Chairperson of the AU Commission, the President of the World Bank Group, and the President of the African Development Bank, to strengthen the focus on and commitment to the Region of the international community;

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General to produce a written report within five months on the United Nations' assessment of the situation in the Lake Chad Basin Region as it relates to elements of this resolution, particularly regarding the progress made and remaining challenges, and possible measures for consideration, including with respect to achieving greater coherence of efforts in the context of overlapping regional strategies, and thereafter to include these elements in regular reporting by UNOCA and UNOWAS.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2295 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report on a quarterly basis on its implementation, focusing on progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it.

II. Major political developments

Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

2. The signatory parties to the peace agreement implemented some of the political and security interim measures provided for therein by establishing interim authorities in three of the five northern regions and launching mixed patrols. The progress occurred against a backdrop of intensifying attacks on the parties by actors outside the peace process. A collapse of the peace process was feared when a deadly terrorist attack in Gao on 18 January killed 54 members of the mixed patrols. Instead, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to the process and constructively engaged in dialogue. The efforts by the international mediation team and the effective use by MINUSMA of its good-offices mandate played a significant role in helping the parties to achieve tangible results on the ground. Nevertheless, progress in key areas towards the stabilization of the country, such as the restoration of State authority in the central and northern regions and security sector reform, remained limited. The divergence of views between the Government and the signatory armed groups on the duration of the interim period, the objectives and scope of the conférence d'entente nationale (conference for national harmony), the holding of elections and the status of splinter armed groups remained.

3. The work of the Agreement Monitoring Committee continued, albeit with continued tensions between the signatory parties, amid intense engagement by the international mediation team to bring the parties together. Further to the withdrawal of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) from the Committee on 20 December, the international mediation team, including MINUSMA, continued to

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encourage the group to resume its participation. On 16 January, MINUSMA and other stakeholders met the CMA leaders in Kidal and stressed the need to engage. CMA deplored what it saw as a lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making of the implementation process and delays in implementing interim measures, among other issues. It maintained its request for a high-level meeting to be held outside Bamako to overcome the stalemate. The fifteenth meeting of the Committee was held on 30 January in Bamako without the presence of CMA. Halfway through the meeting, the representatives of the Platform coalition of armed groups walked out in solidarity with CMA.

4. The Government nonetheless agree to hold a high-level meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Bamako in February. Subsequently, the international mediation team met the three signatory parties bilaterally to stress the importance of engaging in good faith to break the stalemate in the peace process. On 31 January, the signatory parties agreed to establish a tripartite working group, led by the Chair of the Committee, to prepare for the high-level meeting. From 7 to 9 February, meetings of the working group were held in Bamako, facilitated by the international mediation team. Participants prepared a position paper identifying hurdles to implementing the peace agreement with recommendations on ways to address them. The Mission provided technical, logistical and financial support to the meetings.

5. On 10 February, the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Algeria, Ramtane Lamamra, the lead mediator, convened a high-level meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. The delegation of the Government of Mali was headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and African Integration, Abdoulaye Diop, and included the Minister of Defence and Veterans' Affairs, the Minister for Security and Civil Protection and the Minister for Decentralization and State Reform. The Ombudsman of Mali, Baba Hakim Haïdara, and the High Representative of the President for the implementation of the peace agreement, Mahamadou Diagouraga, also attended. CMA and the Platform were represented at the highest level. Among the international mediation team, ministers from the Governments of Algeria, Mauritania and the Niger attended, as did high-level representatives of the African Union, the Government of France and MINUSMA.

6. The meeting generated a renewed impetus for the implementation of the peace agreement by reaching agreement on a new timeline and arrangements for key pending interim measures, namely the establishment of the interim authorities in the five northern regions between 13 and 20 February and the launch of mixed patrols, beginning with Gao on 20 February. Participants also agreed on the allocation of positions for the interim authorities and transitional councils. The Government committed itself to consulting the signatory armed groups on the constitutional review, aligning the status of the armed groups' combatants participating in the mixed patrols to that of the Malian armed forces, compensating the families of the victims of the attack of 18 January on the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao, providing for the sustenance of combatants at the camps of the Mechanism in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu and reviewing the appointments made for the regional offices of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, in consultation with the signatory armed groups. Participants also agreed to create a high-level

consultation framework to ensure adequate follow-up between the meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee under the leadership of the High Representative of the President, ensure an inclusive consultation on the organization of the conférence d'entente nationale and appoint an independent observer as soon as possible.

7. The signatory parties eventually agreed on the composition of the interim authorities for the five regions on 15 February. The Government named a CMA member to head the interim authority in the Kidal region, a member of the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad to head the transitional council for the Ménaka region and its own representative to head the transitional council for the Taoudenni region. The Platform and CMA nominated their own members to head the interim authorities for the Gao and Timbuktu regions, respectively. Only one woman was appointed, as the first vice-president of the transitional council for the Ménaka region. The appointment of a member of the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad for the Ménaka region notwithstanding, other splinter groups continued to express concern at their exclusion from the appointments.

8. The establishment of the interim authority in the Kidal region was postponed on 18 February after objections on the part of CMA to the appointment of a new governor for the region on the eve of the inauguration ceremony, citing his alleged link to the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés. CMA also boycotted the launch of mixed patrols in Gao on 20 February. On 24 February, the High Representative of the President announced that the signatory parties had agreed on a new timeline for the establishment of the interim authorities. The inauguration was conducted in Kidal on 28 February and Gao and Ménaka on 2 March, but was postponed indefinitely for Timbuktu and Taoudenni owing to an outbreak of hostilities. On 5 March, two factions of the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad, each associated with CMA and the Platform, attacked two checkpoints of the Malian armed forces on the outskirts of Timbuktu before occupying them for five days. They objected to the nomination of a government representative to head the transitional council for the Taoudenni region, a region largely dominated by the Arab community. MINUSMA immediately issued a statement in which it condemned the ceasefire violations, strengthened its presence in Timbuktu and deployed military observers to assess the situation, while the signatory parties dispatched a mixed monitoring and verification team. At the time of writing, negotiations among the signatory parties to resolve the issue were continuing.

9. The Government advanced the preparations for the organization of the conférence d'entente nationale. On 13 February, the Chair of the preparatory committee, Mr. Haïdara, nominated its members from ministries, civil society and women's organizations, consisting of 32 per cent women and representing various ethnicities. As agreed at the high-level meeting, he met the leaders of the signatory armed groups on 14 February to reiterate the invitation to them to nominate representatives. Both CMA and the Platform agreed and stressed the need to establish the interim authorities and advance cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration before convening the conference. They also maintained their stance that the question of Azawad should be discussed. The opposition parties expressed concern over the tight timeline for the organization of the conference and cautioned that focusing only on issues relating to the north would further divide the country. Civil society representatives called for more

inclusion of women and young people in the conference and its preparation. Mr. Haïdara conducted regional consultations in the northern regions, except in Kidal, from 10 to 15 February and in some of the southern and central regions from 18 to 24 February. MINUSMA and experts from the Mediation Support Unit provided technical and logistical assistance to the preparatory committee, including for its regional consultations and awareness-raising campaign. On 18 March, the Council of Ministers announced that the conference would be held between 27 March and 2 April in Bamako. The next day, CMA and the Platform jointly addressed a letter to the head of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, expressing concern over what they perceived as a lack of inclusive consultations on the planning of the conference and noting the absence of the interim authorities in the Taoudenni and Timbuktu regions and the pending consultations in the Kidal region. On 27 March, the conference opened without the participation of the opposition parties and CMA. CMA subsequently agreed to participate in the conference further to an agreement reached with the Government on the modalities governing the conference.

10. CMA remained involved in preparing the launch of mixed patrols in Gao, even though it had suspended its participation in the Agreement Monitoring Committee in December. A first group of 113 CMA elements, with a MINUSMA escort, began to deploy to Gao from Kidal on 28 December, arriving at the disarmament and registration site in Gao on 5 January. To include previously excluded groups, the Government proposed to add 150 additional members to the Operational Coordination Mechanism (75 each for CMA and the Platform). MINUSMA screened, vetted and registered the CMA combatants and those arriving later from Ber, Timbuktu region. The Mission identified 10 children among the CMA and Platform members and is taking appropriate measures, as mentioned in paragraphs 39 and 40 below.

11. The commitment of the signatory parties to the peace process was tested in Gao on 18 January when 54 people were killed and more than 100 injured when a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device exploded inside the Operational Coordination Mechanism camp. The attack came as more than 600 members of the Malian armed forces, CMA and the Platform were preparing to conduct a mixed patrol. Al Mourabitoun, a group affiliated with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, claimed responsibility for the attack. In the immediate aftermath, MINUSMA deployed a quick-reaction force and surveillance air assets, mobilized its medical and casualty evacuation assets and treated victims at its level I medical facility. MINUSMA also supported the Government in reinforcing security around the camp, while engaging with the CMA and Platform leaders. The international mediation team and the signatory parties issued a joint statement in which they condemned the attack following an emergency meeting among them convened by MINUSMA in Bamako. A high-level CMA delegation visited Gao from Kidal, while the Malian authorities, signatory armed groups and the international mediation team met in Gao on 20 January and demonstrated unity and resolve to implement the peace agreement, while committing themselves to engaging in a renewed dialogue.

12. On 23 February, the signatory parties launched the first mixed patrols in Gao. On the eve of the launch, they reached a consensus to integrate eight splinter armed groups into the Operational Coordination Mechanism. From 1 to 3 March,

MINUSMA registered 175 combatants from those groups. A total of 175 serviceable weapons were registered and placed under the management of the Mechanism.

13. The National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Commission on Integration became operational on 5 January. Nevertheless, the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, adopted by the Government on 8 December, is yet to be fully funded. The Commission on Integration has not yet adopted criteria for the integration of combatants into the national defence and security forces. On 9 February, MINUSMA handed over the first of eight completed cantonment sites in Ber to the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. MINUSMA continued to assist the Government in meeting the needs of women and children associated with armed groups. In December, the Government appointed a senior defence official, an expert in the protection of women and children, to the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to ensure the protection of women's and children's rights.

14. The National Council for Security Sector Reform, with MINUSMA support, continued efforts to finalize the concepts for the territorial police and local security advisory committees. From 6 to 10 and 13 to 17 February, the United Nations provided training on counter-terrorism and human rights for 50 law enforcement officials, including personnel from the specialized judicial unit of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, which is responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes relating to terrorism and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. United Nations entities continued their joint support for the development of a national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and countering terrorism.

Other political developments

15. The Government and MINUSMA have established a technical team, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to monitor progress in the implementation of the peace agreement in line with the benchmarks and timelines contained in the previous report (S/2016/1137, annex I). The team is expected to meet every quarter to review and provide an update on progress made by the signatory parties.

16. Since the previous report, the restoration and extension of State authority to the northern and central regions have remained limited. Prevailing insecurity in those regions not only prevented the redeployment of State officials, but also compelled already deployed officials to leave their duty stations. To date, only one third of State officials, including judicial and corrections personnel, have been redeployed to the northern regions. While there was no permanent government presence in the Taoudenni region, the establishment of an interim authority in Kidal marked the gradual return of the Government to Kidal.

17. Preparations for the 2017/18 electoral cycle have advanced. On 7 February, the Government announced that the district elections would be held on 28 May 2017 alongside municipal by-elections in 59 municipalities where voting was not held in November 2016. Regional elections and a constitutional referendum will be held on 9 July 2017, the presidential election in July 2018 and legislative elections in November 2018. On 8 January, the Government requested financial and technical support from the international community for the elections. From 28 February to

20 March, MINUSMA organized capacity-building workshops for some 400 women candidates in Gao, Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso and Timbuktu.

Regional developments

18. Against the backdrop of increased attacks by violent extremist, terrorist and criminal groups, the leaders of the subregion took initiatives to counter the threats. On 24 January, at the second extraordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State of the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority, held in Niamey, the Heads of State of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger agreed to create a joint multinational security force to ensure effective control of their common borders and to enhance their capacity to combat terrorism.

19. On 6 February in Bamako, the Government of Mali hosted a summit of the Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel. To address the resurgence of violent extremist and terrorist networks, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and other forms of transnational organized crime, the Heads of State decided to establish a joint force, noting that mandates from the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council would be required to ensure interoperability, coordination and potential support. On 8 March, the Chiefs of Defence of the Group held an extraordinary meeting in Bamako and approved the strategic concept of operations for the joint force, which foresees a force composed of 5,000 military, police and civilian personnel, including seven battalions each comprising 650 soldiers. It is also envisaged that the force will be deployed along the borders of the Group's member States during the first phase and to other areas of those States in the second phase. The draft concept will be submitted to the Council of Ministers of the Group for further approval. The meeting was preceded by a two-day meeting of the representatives of the Group, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the United Nations, the French forces and others on the concept, logistical aspects and rules of procedure of the force.

20. Violent extremist and terrorist groups continued to exploit the porous borders of Mali to launch cross-border attacks. On 8 January in the Ménaka region, unidentified individuals attacked the Malian armed forces near the border with the Niger, injuring a soldier. On 22 February, to the west of the Niger close to the border with Mali, terrorists killed at least 11 soldiers from the Niger and wounded 19 others who were patrolling the area. On 5 March, assailants attacked a Malian military post in Boulikessi, Mopti region, near the border with Burkina Faso, killing 15 Malian soldiers and injuring 5 others. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (see para. 26 below) claimed responsibility for the attack. On 6 March, unidentified individuals attacked a post of the gendarmerie of the Niger in Ouanzerbé, Niger, near the border with Burkina Faso and Mali, killing five gendarmes.

21. Transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking in Mali and the subregion continued to have an impact on the peace process, including by obstructing progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and causing insecurity in the north. Recent trends of increasing trafficking of drugs, financing of terrorism through illicit trafficking and the more frequent use of trafficking routes for illegal migration flows point to a greater nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism in the subregion. During the reporting period, the Malian authorities seized 3,416 kg

of trafficked drugs at the airport in Bamako and in the Gao and Kayes regions and recorded cases of trafficking of weapons, counterfeit medicines and other goods, including at the southern border with Burkina Faso.

III. Major security developments

22. The security situation remained volatile in northern and central Mali, where the signatory parties continued to be targeted by violent extremist and terrorist groups. Consistent with previous trends, attacks against French and MINUSMA forces persisted. Overall, the number of attacks claimed by violent extremist groups almost tripled, rising from 28 in 2015 to 85 in 2016. Insecurity further spread in the central regions, threatening civilians.

Asymmetric and other attacks

23. Attacks against Malian, French and MINUSMA forces, in addition to the signatory armed groups, have become more sophisticated, complex and lethal, employing tactics such as suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, remote-controlled explosive devices, small arms fire and indirect fire. These types of attacks almost doubled in frequency from 2015 to 2016. The number of incidents involving improvised explosive devices increased by 15 per cent in 2016, including in the central regions, almost doubling the number of casualties among the Malian, French and MINUSMA forces in such attacks, from 110 in 2015 to 210 in 2016. The number of casualties from these three forces caused by suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, including in complex attacks, tripled from 15 in 2015 to 52 in 2016.

24. Violent extremists and terrorists conducted 28 attacks against the Malian defence and security forces and 15 against MINUSMA, compared with 25 and 29 in the previous reporting period. The attacks against the Malian forces were perpetrated increasingly close to city centres, indicating an increase in the confidence and operational capacity of the perpetrators. In total, 49 members of the Malian forces were killed and 75 injured in the attacks, compared with the 15 killed and 33 injured in the previous reporting period. One peacekeeper was killed and 20 were injured, compared with the 3 killed and 25 injured in the previous reporting period.

25. In February, the Government adopted an integrated security plan for the central regions of Mopti and Ségou, outlining security, development, governance and an overall communications approach for tackling the growing insecurity there.

26. On 2 March, Ansar Eddine, the Front de libération du Macina, Al Mourabitoun and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb announced on social media a joint alliance under a new armed group, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, led by the Ansar Eddine leader, Iyad ag Ghali.

Protection of civilians

27. Improvised explosive devices continued to be the most frequent source of collateral damage to civilians, with armed forces being the intended target. Civilians were victims of these devices in areas controlled by armed groups in Kidal, and on main roads connecting the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions. On 19 February,

1 civilian was killed and 13 others were injured when a bus struck a roadside bomb in the Timbuktu region.

28. Targeted attacks against civilians increased in the central regions of Mopti and Ségou, displacing civilians. Grievances among the population stemming from insecurity, a lack of opportunities and the diminished State presence persisted. On 11 February in the district of Macina, Ségou region, unidentified assailants killed a civilian known for his opposition to the growing radical influence in the area. On 12 February, in an ostensibly retaliatory act, unidentified assailants attacked houses mostly inhabited by members of the Fulani community who were allegedly supporters of radical elements, causing the loss of at least 20 lives and injuries to 18 people. On 18 February, unidentified armed men abducted three civilians in the Ségou region, reportedly killing two of them. The other escaped. On 19 February, unidentified attackers summarily executed nine civilians, including a 17-year-old boy, and seriously injured another in Niono, Ségou region. The attack was allegedly in retaliation for the incident in Macina. MINUSMA immediately dispatched a patrol to Niono as a show of strength and to deter further violence. The capacity of the Malian defence and security forces to prevent and respond to security incidents remained limited. As a result of these incidents, at least 9,000 civilians in the Mopti and Ségou regions were displaced.

29. MINUSMA continued to conduct coordinated operations with the Malian and French armed forces and carried out medium-range and long-range patrols in the northern and central regions. It also intensified military patrols in areas between Douentza, Gossi, Mopti and the border with Burkina Faso. It continued to patrol key population centres and carried out 845 joint patrols with the Malian police and gendarmerie in northern and central Mali and in Bamako. In keeping with resolution 2295 (2016) and an updated analysis of the political and security situation, MINUSMA updated its strategy for the protection of civilians in March, taking into account the situation in the central regions, where the protection of civilians is becoming a major concern.

Support to the Malian defence and security forces

30. MINUSMA continued to assist the operations of the armed forces, including with surveillance and reconnaissance, air support and medical evacuation. The Mission regularly met representatives of the Malian and French armed forces on coordinated operations, patrols and intelligence sharing. MINUSMA has initiated administrative procedures to transfer its camp in Léré, Timbuktu region, to the Malian defence and security forces. The Mission remains committed to continuing efforts to ensure compliance with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy by pursuing the effective implementation of mitigating measures by the recipient entities.

31. The Malian police, gendarmerie and civil protection authorities, with MINUSMA support, developed a community-oriented policing model aimed at enhancing the confidence of the population in these security forces, strengthening their partnership and mobilizing communities to help to address their security concerns and prevent crime. MINUSMA also trained 850 Malian police officers, including 55 women, on topics relating to efforts to combat organized crime and terrorism. Individual police officers with technical expertise continued to be

co-located with the Malian police to support their investigative capacity, including for the specialized investigative brigade. MINUSMA continued to assist the Government in making the specialized unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime operational.

Mine action, weapons and small arms

32. The Mine Action Service raised awareness of explosive hazards in conflict-affected communities in central and northern Mali, reaching some 6,760 people. MINUSMA trained 24 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces on the mitigation of explosive threats and refurbished two storage facilities for weapons and ammunition, thereby contributing to preventing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. MINUSMA continued to provide technical assistance to the national explosive ordnance disposal operations and coordination centre in Bamako, including by handing over technical equipment for its quick-reaction force.

IV. Human rights situation

33. The human rights situation remained of serious concern. MINUSMA documented 74 cases of human rights violations and abuses, involving at least 204 victims, including 14 children, compared with 104 cases and 235 victims in the previous period. The cases included 4 instances of summary execution, 2 of enforced disappearance, 9 of ill-treatment, 3 of deliberate attack against peacekeeping personnel, 10 of recruitment and use of children by armed groups and 23 of unlawful detention. Members of the Malian defence and security forces continued to be the main alleged perpetrators, accounting for 38 cases, while the Platform and CMA are allegedly responsible for 18 and 9 cases, respectively. Violent extremist groups and non-signatory armed groups were responsible for five incidents, including three attacks against peacekeeping personnel.

34. In the Mopti and Ségou regions, radical armed elements continued to intimidate communities, underscoring the inability of law enforcement officials to protect civilians. MINUSMA documented instances of wilful killing of local authorities, local chiefs and law enforcement officials by violent extremist groups. Unidentified armed individuals assassinated the re-elected mayor of Hairé and the mayor of Mondoro, both in Mopti region, on 18 and 28 January, respectively. Intimidation of the population by radical elements was also reported. On 10 January and 12 February, armed men entered the mosques in villages near Ténenkou, Mopti region, and preached religious extremism, while residents of another village were ordered to close schools and the radio station.

35. The Malian authorities arrested 77 individuals in relation to the conflict, including for alleged terrorist activities, and released 8 of them. A total of 47 individuals were detained by the authorities without an arrest warrant or beyond the legally permitted period. As at 22 March, 242 conflict-related detainees, including 185 held on terrorism-related charges, remained in State-run detention facilities. Among them were three minors. The illegal detention of individuals by signatory armed groups continued. CMA and the Platform detained at least 56 individuals, including 40 in law enforcement-related matters in areas under their control, while releasing 53. The total number of detainees held by signatory armed

groups was 21 civilians and 6 combatants of the signatory armed groups, including those detained during previous reporting periods.

36. MINUSMA continued to assist the Government to tackle serious human rights violations and combat impunity. In February, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and MINUSMA jointly assessed 97 of 330 cases of serious human rights violations that the Mission shared with the Ministry in 2016 through a monthly information-sharing mechanism. The assessment established that 21 cases had received a judicial response.

37. On 3 January, victims began to file statements with the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. As at 22 March, more than 1,800 individuals, including 1,067 women, had made statements with the Commission, including with its regional branches. MINUSMA assisted the Commission's regional branch personnel with training in the factual verification of cases, public information and outreach to the population, among other things. Access to the regional branches remained difficult for victims and witnesses living outside regional capitals.

Conflict-related sexual violence

38. MINUSMA continued to follow up on documented cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including 16 cases involving the Malian defence and security forces since 2014. On 23 December, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Malian armed forces agreed to hold regular consultations on pending cases.

Children in armed conflict

39. As part of the registration of CMA and Platform combatants joining the mixed patrols in Gao, MINUSMA identified 10 children between 16 and 17 years of age among 390 combatants. Discussions are continuing with CMA and the Platform, which both pledged to hand over the children to protection partners for provisional care and family tracing.

40. Further to the public commitment by CMA announced in February 2016, on 5 March CMA signed an action plan with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children. The action plan is binding on all armed groups that make up CMA, including the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad. The United Nations will continue discussions with other armed groups with a view to signing similar action plans to ensure the release and reintegration of all children from armed groups in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

V. Humanitarian situation

41. The humanitarian situation remains deeply concerning, with people affected by the conflict continuing to struggle to gain access to food, water, health care and education. Humanitarian actors continued to deliver assistance, playing a vital role in meeting the basic needs of vulnerable people in a context of limited State presence and infrastructure.

42. Malnutrition persists. Some 620,000 children under 5 years of age and 56,500 pregnant and lactating women are estimated to require nutritional assistance in 2017. Since January, an estimated 14,600 children with severe acute malnutrition have been admitted to therapeutic feeding centres, among whom 1,960 were suffering from complications. The United Nations and partners continued to assist the Government to ensure the availability of life-saving supplies for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition, including by providing therapeutic food to assist 29,000 children nationwide.

43. In preparation for the lean season between harvesting periods from June to September, the United Nations and partners supported the implementation of the Government's national response plan to assist some 495,000 severely food-insecure people, more than 280,000 of whom are in conflict-affected areas. The United Nations also provided support to protect and rebuild the livelihoods of those facing food insecurity in the northern and central regions.

44. Owing to recent targeted attacks against civilians in the Mopti and Ségou regions and armed conflicts in the Ménaka, Mopti and Kidal regions, the number of internally displaced persons increased from some 36,700 to 45,800, while the number of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger rose from some 136,000 to 141,450. The United Nations facilitated the voluntary return of 337 Malian refugees from the Niger to the Gao, Ménaka and Kidal regions.

45. Humanitarian actors continued to work with the Government to assist schools in the northern and central regions. A total of 15 schools have closed since October 2016, bringing the number of closed schools in the Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu regions to 436, of a total of 2,380 schools. The influence of radical extremist groups opposing education and the prevailing security situation continued to affect school closures.

46. Constraints to humanitarian access continued to be recorded in the northern and central regions, primarily associated with insecurity and contamination of roads by explosive hazards. In conflict-related areas, the United Nations and partners negotiated access with the leaders of armed groups and community leaders to reach the population in need. The difficult access notwithstanding, humanitarian actors continued to deliver assistance to people in need, yet also continued to fall victim to criminal activities. In total, 15 incidents involving humanitarian actors were registered, compared with 29 cases in the previous reporting period.

47. On 9 February, humanitarian actors launched the humanitarian response plan for 2017, targeting 1.4 million most vulnerable people out of 3.7 million in need of humanitarian assistance. At 22 March, only $8 million of the $293 million required for the plan had been financed.

VI. Economic development and cultural preservation

48. The Government's ability to deliver peace dividends in the north continued to be constrained by its limited presence and delays in establishing regional development agencies. The disbursement of funds received following the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, held in Paris on 22 October

2015, was further delayed as the development strategy for the northern regions had yet to be finalized and the sustainable development fund to be created.

49. In support of the Government, MINUSMA provided peace dividends to the population in the north, including through funding from the Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali and quick-impact projects. In total, 24 such projects financed from the Trust Fund were completed, while 23 new projects were added to the 46 continuing quick-impact projects to support the provision of dividends. The Trust Fund and quick-impact projects also supported the implementation of key provisions of the peace agreement, including through the provision of water and fuel to the mixed patrols of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao and office equipment to the preparatory committee for the conférence d'entente nationale.

50. MINUSMA, the United Nations country team and non-governmental organizations launched three projects in support of the peace process in northern and central Mali and in Bamako, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund. The projects promoted the participation of women in the implementation of the peace agreement, including in security sector reform, supported the increasing of public trust in the Malian defence and security forces and assisted young people to take part in national reconciliation efforts, among other things.

51. On 17 and 18 February, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization organized a workshop on illicit trafficking of cultural property in Timbuktu, bringing together more than 20 experts and community representatives from the Bamako, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions.

VII. Capacities of the Mission

Military

52. Continuing significant gaps in critical capabilities coupled with growing security risks constrained the force's ability to conduct mandated tasks, including the protection of civilians, and to escort convoys to the northern regions and protect its members. As at 22 March, the strength of the military component of MINUSMA stood at 10,923 personnel, or 82 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289. Women accounted for 1.9 per cent of the force. The shortage of armoured personnel carriers remained high, at 95. MINUSMA continues to require two helicopter units, one attack helicopter unit for Kidal with night-vision capability and one medium utility helicopter unit for Timbuktu; an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance company for Kidal; airfield support units for Gao and Timbuktu; a special forces company for Timbuktu; an explosive ordnance disposal company for Timbuktu; and the long-awaited combat convoy battalion. Notwithstanding the Mission's readiness to receive the quick reaction force from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, initially expected to begin deployment to Mopti by mid-February, its arrival was delayed; the force is now expected to deploy from Dakar in May.

Police

53. As at 22 March, the strength of the police component of MINUSMA stood at 1,276 personnel, remaining at 66 per cent of its authorized strength of 1,920 with 88 per cent of individual police officers (14 per cent women) and 62 per cent formed

police unit personnel (5 per cent women) deployed. Three additional formed police units, for Douentza (Mopti region), Goundam (Timbuktu region) and Ménaka, are scheduled to deploy in May. The component continues to require a special intervention team, 20 armoured personnel carriers, 11 armoured cars and an additional 41 individual police officers with specialized expertise in forensics, counter-terrorism, improvised explosive devices, serious organized crime and drug trafficking and small arms and light weapons.

Civilian personnel

54. As at 22 March, 87 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 87 per cent of international staff, 85 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 87 per cent of national staff. Women held 27 per cent of international posts, 33 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 19 per cent of national staff posts.

Camp construction and securing supply routes

55. MINUSMA continued efforts to complete the construction of camps, including for formed police units to be deployed in Douentza, Goundam and Ménaka. The completion of already operational camps advanced: the MINUSMA operational base in Bamako is 90 per cent completed, the Timbuktu integrated camp is 88 per cent completed and the Gao logistics hub is 92 per cent completed. MINUSMA began construction work to upgrade its camp in Mopti to an integrated camp in order to accommodate civilian personnel in a dedicated zone around the camp.

56. MINUSMA signed transit agreements with the Governments of Benin and the Niger, on 8 and 10 February, respectively, to open a southern supply route to the logistics hub in Gao from Cotonou, Benin, through Niamey. This new supply route is expected to improve the efficiency of the Mission's logistics convoys to the northern regions.

Environment

57. MINUSMA continued to conduct environmental inspections in all deployment sites and raise the awareness of its personnel of the environmental mandate. The Mission created regional environmental committees in Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu in January and February to monitor environmental management, including by installing wastewater treatment plants in all integrated camps.

VIII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

58. As at 22 March, seven security incidents involving United Nations civilian personnel had occurred. One peacekeeper was killed in the Kidal region on 23 January during an attack on the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok. There had been 15 attacks against humanitarian actors. Asymmetric attacks, in particular using improvised explosive devices, terrorism and crime continued to pose threats and security risks to United Nations staff, premises and operations. In response, MINUSMA re-evaluated and improved security procedures and plans, which include the creation of a joint security plan with Mission-wide security actors, the

deployment of additional troops to particular areas and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. MINUSMA frequently reprioritizes these measures in the light of the continued evolution and spread of these threats, coupled with resource constraints.

59. The dynamic, evolving situation on the ground required enhanced information collection and analysis capacity, including long-range and medium-range reconnaissance missions by drones, even in the face of persisting technological issues that hindered the achievement of full operational capacity. The Mission established a Mission-wide information collection plan and regional police databases, made greater use of various acquisition assets and enhanced cooperation with the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection, with the aim of enhancing the implementation of the mandate and the safety and security of personnel.

60. Prompt medical evacuation remains a challenge owing to insecurity, the long distances involved and the shortage of medium utility helicopters in Timbuktu. The Mission continues to require two aeromedical evacuation teams in Mopti and Tessalit, Kidal region. The Mission's military component continued efforts to conduct and protect medical and casualty evacuations, the challenges associated with the shortage of helicopters notwithstanding.

IX. Conduct and discipline

61. There have been no new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse since the previous report. The two allegations mentioned in that report, received in January and June 2016, are still pending investigation by the relevant troop-contributing countries. MINUSMA continued its prevention activities, including training of personnel, outreach and public information activities on the expected standard of conduct for United Nations personnel, especially the policy on zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse.

X. Observations

62. The political will demonstrated by the signatory parties at the high-level meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 10 February to advance some of the key measures of the peace agreement was commendable. I welcome the subsequent inauguration of the interim authorities in Gao, Kidal and Ménaka and the launch of the mixed patrols in Gao. I acknowledge the signatory parties' willingness to compromise after protracted disagreements over the establishment of the interim arrangements, and I thank the international mediation team, including MINUSMA, for its efforts at this critical juncture in the peace process. I condemn the recent ceasefire violations in Timbuktu and encourage the signatory parties to resolve in earnest the issues impeding the establishment of the remaining interim authorities in Taoudenni and Timbuktu and to take swift steps to launch the mixed patrols in Kidal and Timbuktu.

63. June 2017 will mark two years since the signing of the peace agreement. Yet, progress in the peace process remains uneven and many important provisions of the agreement, including key interim political and security measures, are still to be implemented. With only a few months remaining until the end of the interim period,

immense tasks lie ahead and require redoubled efforts and good faith by all parties. There is a genuine risk that the recent gains could easily be reversed without the genuine commitment of the signatory parties to moving forward and achieving tangible results. The growing insecurity in Mali and across its borders further accentuates the urgent need for the signatory parties to stand together and counter common security threats. I strongly urge them to sustain their renewed commitment to the peace process and implement the peace agreement in full, without further delay. Obstacles to the peace process only further damage Mali, its people and its neighbours. The signatory parties must recall that the onus is on them to fulfil their obligations in the best interest of their people and the region.

64. The signatory parties must continue to tackle their differences through constructive dialogue, with the active support of the international mediation team and MINUSMA. This is the only way to move forward with the peace process. The conférence d'entente nationale offers a crucial opportunity to consider the root causes of the conflict and enhance inclusiveness in the peace process. The meaningful participation of the opposition parties, signatory armed groups and civil society, including women and youth, in the preparation and organization of the conference will be essential for Mali in meeting its peace and reconciliation objectives. I call upon all Malian stakeholders to contribute to the organization and conduct of the conference in a spirit of inclusion and unity.

65. Naturally, a genuine reconciliation process must be accompanied by specific steps to reform relevant national institutions. It will therefore be critical for the constitutional review and its referendum, scheduled for July, to take into consideration the conclusions of the conference. The tight timeline notwithstanding, it remains critical for contentious issues to be resolved through genuine dialogue and consultations. I encourage the signatory parties to maximize the new consultation framework under the auspices of the High Representative of the President and to take forward the envisaged inclusive consultations. I also encourage the Agreement Monitoring Committee to expedite the appointment of an independent observer, as recommended at the high-level meeting.

66. The interim measures must be underpinned by efforts to restore State authority and the rule of law throughout Mali and expand development in the north and elsewhere to the benefit of all Malians. I regret that progress towards comprehensive State reform has thus far been limited. The finalization of a national strategy for security sector reform and the establishment of integration criteria are urgently required to enable members of the signatory armed groups to join security institutions. The signatory armed groups must expedite the cantonment of their combatants. I reiterate my call upon the Government to complete the redeployment plan for the Malian defence and security forces, based on which MINUSMA can determine its support. It is critical for the Government to demonstrate strong resolve to deliver peace dividends to the population in the north and other affected areas. I encourage the Government to seize the opportunity created by the establishment of the interim authorities to accelerate its efforts to ensure that communities benefit from those dividends. I further encourage the international community to contribute the funds pledged at the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali held in October 2015.

67. The security situation continues to deteriorate, in particular in the centre of Mali, but also in the north. The attack in Gao on 18 January against members of the mixed patrols is a manifestation of the increased influence of terrorist groups and spoilers and their determination to derail the peace process. I am deeply concerned by the increasingly sophisticated modus operandi of these groups in their attacks against Malian, French and MINUSMA forces and against the signatory armed groups and civilians. I condemn in the strongest terms these continuing attacks. I express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims, the Government of Mali and the Governments of the countries of the United Nations peacekeepers. I reiterate that attacks targeting United Nations peacekeepers constitute war crimes under international law and call upon the Government to swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice.

68. In the absence of State authority in some parts of the central regions, violent extremists continue to manipulate public sentiment and endanger the safety and security of civilians. I urge the Government to expedite efforts to re-establish State authority in those regions. I reiterate that all Malian parties have a responsibility to respond to the legitimate grievances and concerns of their constituencies to prevent radicalization and the spread of violent extremism. I welcome the development of a multidimensional strategy for the central regions by the Government. MINUSMA stands ready to actively support the implementation of the strategy. Meanwhile, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking continue to have an impact on the security situation in Mali and the subregion. Those criminal activities, which provide steady income for violent extremist groups operating in Mali and targeting MINUSMA and others, directly interfere with peace efforts and the implementation of the peace agreement. I remain concerned at this negative trend and note the urgency of taking measures against those who obstruct or threaten the peace process. I intend to submit recommendations in this respect in subsequent reports.

69. The growing insecurity across the southern borders with Burkina Faso and the Niger continues to demonstrate the need for enhanced regional cooperation to address security threats. I commend in this regard the initiative by the States members of the Group of Five for the Sahel to control their common borders and enhance their capacity to combat terrorism through the creation of a regional force. In my meetings with the Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel, I have agreed to reach out to the Security Council with regard to their initiative and the forms of United Nations support to be seriously considered. I recognize that the proposed military response needs to be aligned with the peace agreement and undertaken in close cooperation with Operation Barkhane, the existing counter-terrorism operation. The initiative has the potential to help to create an improved operational environment for MINUSMA, and I urge the States members of the Group to maintain their contributions to the Mission, while at the same time making available the capacities required to operationalize the decisions taken at the meeting in Bamako on 8 March. MINUSMA is committed to providing immediate support measures to the Malian armed forces within the scope of resolution 2295 (2016).

70. MINUSMA continues to operate in one of the most hostile environments for peacekeeping. The Mission remains the sole regular force with a constant presence throughout northern Mali in a security vacuum created by delays in the peace process and the absence of operational national defence and security forces. The slow pace of implementation of the peace agreement and the deterioration of the

security situation indicate that demands on and expectations of MINUSMA and the French forces will remain high. Consequently, the Mission constantly reviews and takes the corrective measures necessary to adapt its footprint and enhance the safety and security of its personnel, bearing in mind that MINUSMA remains the primary target of terrorist attacks. The current operational environment suggests that this trend will continue.

71. Since the adoption of resolution 2295 (2016), MINUSMA has adopted a more robust and proactive posture. Nevertheless, it continues to experience a significant lack of the personnel and capabilities required to implement its mandate, including the protection of civilians and the creation of humanitarian space. Months after the adoption of the resolution, none of the additional authorized military and police personnel — 2,049 and 480, respectively — and none of the additional military assets authorized have been deployed, the determined efforts to generate them notwithstanding. This lack of critical capacity has been compounded by the delays in deploying the quick-reaction force to Mopti. Support from all troop- and police-contributing countries is required now more than ever. I call upon Member States to help to fill these capability gaps, including urgently required helicopter units, an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance company, airfield support units, a special forces company, an explosive ordnance disposal company, a combat convoy battalion, armoured personnel carriers and armoured cars for individual police officers.

72. Humanitarian actors continue to deliver assistance to communities and individuals in need, despite difficult access in an extremely challenging environment. I remind all actors hampering access of their obligations under international humanitarian law to refrain from any action that deepens the suffering of people in need. I strongly encourage the Government to redouble its efforts to expand the coverage of basic social services in northern and central Mali. I further encourage international partners to contribute generously to the humanitarian response plan for 2017, which would help to address the needs of crisis-affected people. I applaud the contributions of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to support the efforts of the authorities to provide services to the population, especially in the north. This is vital to bringing peace dividends and reinforcing the link between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development needs. I stress the need for continued coordination and integrated efforts to achieve these objectives and provide timely responses to emerging needs in northern and central Mali.

73. I strongly condemn human rights violations and abuses committed by State actors, armed groups and violent extremist groups, among others. I remain particularly concerned about allegations of human rights violations committed in the name of countering violent extremism. Tackling impunity is an essential component of reconciliation. It is essential that Malian stakeholders maintain their commitment to combating impunity, including by strengthening internal mechanisms for the defence and security forces. The taking of statements initiated by the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission signals an important step in identifying victims and conducting investigations. MINUSMA remains committed to supporting transitional justice, including by continuing to assist the Committee.

74. I express my sincere gratitude to my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his tireless efforts in advancing the peace process. I pay tribute to the women and men of MINUSMA and to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their dedication to the cause of peace and for working in such arduous locations under continued difficult conditions. I commend the members of the international mediation team led by Algeria for their sustained support to the Malian parties. I express my gratitude to the African Union, the Economic Community of Western African States, the European Union, bilateral partners and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as non-governmental organizations and all other partners, who spare no effort to contribute to peace and security in Mali.

Annex

Military and police strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as at 15 March 2017

	Military component (staff officers and units)			*Police component*								
				Individual police officers			*Formed police units*			*Total police*		
Country	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Armenia	1		1									
Austria	6		6									
Bangladesh	1 529		1 529				136		136	136		136
Belgium	7		7									
Benin	257		257	18	1	19	140		140	158	1	159
Bhutan	3		3									
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		2									
Burkina Faso	1 671	45	1 716	27	1	28	131	7	138	158	8	166
Burundi				10		10				10		10
Cambodia	296	7	303									
Cameroon	2		2	14		14				14		14
Chad	1 390	2	1 392	4	4	8				4	4	8
China	380	19	399									
Côte d'Ivoire	7		7									
Czechia	24	1	25									
Denmark	30	1	31	9		9				9		9
Egypt	67		67	4		4				4		4
El Salvador	85	7	92									
Estonia	10		10									
Ethiopia	1		1									
Finland	6		6	5		5				5		5
France	25	1	26	9		9				9		9
Gambia	4		4									
Germany	493	14	507	11	2	13				11	2	13
Ghana	219		219									
Guinea	858		858	6	3	9				6	3	9
Guinea-Bissau	1		1									
Hungary				1		1				1		1
Indonesia	6		6									
Italy	1		1									
Jordan	1		1	5		5				5		5

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component								
				Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Kenya	5	3	8									
Latvia	3		3									
Liberia	72	6	78									
Lithuania	4		4									
Madagascar				1		1				1		1
Mauritania	4		4									
Nepal	146	3	149									
Netherlands	348	30	378	22	3	25				22	3	25
Niger	859		859	11	14	25				11	14	25
Nigeria	64	17	81				118	22	140	118	22	140
Norway	14	1	15									
Portugal	60	8	68									
Romania	1		1	7		7				7		7
Senegal	577		577	11		11	269	9	278	280	9	289
Sierra Leone	6		6									
Sri Lanka	4		4									
Sweden	193	13	206	6	3	9				6	3	9
Switzerland	6		6	2		2				2		2
Togo	911	28	939	3	8	11	134	6	140	137	14	151
Tunisia				53	2	55				53	2	55
Turkey				1		1				1		1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2		2									
United States of America	20	5	25									
Yemen	6		6	9		9				9		9
Total	**10 687**	**211**	**10 898**	**249**	**41**	**290**	**928**	**44**	**972**	**1 177**	**85**	**1 262**

MINUSMA
Deployment
March 2017
ALGERIA
MAURITANIA
NIGER
NIGERIA
BURKINA FASO
GHANA
BENIN
SENEGAL
GUINEA
COTE D'IVOIRE
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA-BISSAU
GAMBIA
MALI
Sector WEST
Sector NORTH
Sector EAST
KIDAL
GAO
TOMBOUCTOU
MOPTI
SEGOU
KAYES
KOULIKORO
SIKASSO
Bamako
Mopti / Sevare
Gao
Kidal
Tessalit
Aguelhok
Tombouctou
Goundam
Douentza
Ansongo
Menaka
Bourem
Ber
Niafunke
Diabaly
Niono
Segou
San
Koutiala
Sikasso
Bougouni
Kolondieba
Kita
Kenieba
Nioro du Sahel
Yelimane
Kayes
Diema
Yelimane
Ouagadougou
Ouahigouya
Dori
Gorom-Gorom
Markoye
Arbinda
Djibo
Nouna
Dedougou
Banfora
Gaoua
Bobo-Dioulasso
Orodara
Sikasso
Kolondieba
Bougouni
Kadiolo
Kenieba
Kita
Kati
Bamako
Koulikoro
Nioro du Sahel
Yelimane
Kayes
Diema
Yelimane
Aguelhok
Tessalit
Kidal
Menaka
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Ouahigouya
Dori
Gorom-Gorom
Markoye
Arbinda
Djibo
Nouna
Dedougou
Banfora
Gaoua
Bobo-Dioulasso
Orodara
National capital
Regional capital
Town, village
Major airport
International boundary
Regional boundary
Sector line
Main road
Other road
Track
Railroad
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
Map No. 4256 Rev. 19 UNITED NATIONS
March 2017 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section (formerly Cartographic Section)